

Zion National Park Historic Trails System,
Hidden Canyon Trail
Zion National Park
Springdale vicinity
Washington County
Utah

HAER No. UT-40-F

HAER

UTAH,

27-SPDA.V,

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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Zion National Park Historic Trails System, Hidden Canyon Trail

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Location: Zion National Park
Springdale vicinity, Washington County, Utah

Date of Construction: 1928; Alterations - 1966, 1984

Architect/Designer: Guy D. Edwards, Assistant Engineer
F. A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer
Zion National Park

Present Owner: National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

Present Use: Hiking trail

Significance: Built with native materials and associated with the
"National Park Service-Rustic" architectural style,
the Hidden Canyon Trail possesses structural integrity.
A deliberate effort was made in construction and design
to blend the trail into the cliff and shield it from
view.

Researcher: James Jurale
October 6, 1988

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Construction work on Hidden Canyon Trail began on July 23, 1928, and was completed on August 27, 1928. Guy D. Edwards, Assistant Engineer, and F. A. Kittredge, Chief Engineer, Zion National Park, were responsible for trail design and construction. Completed in three sections, the total cost of the trail, which provided access to an isolated "hanging canyon" was \$2,113.36. Work on the third section required men to hang from 100-foot long ropes while operating jackhammers. Restoration work was performed in 1966 and 1984.

The trail begins at Hidden Canyon Junction, a point on the East Rim Trail 3150 feet above its origin at the south end of the Weeping Rock parking area. It leads up a talus slope, over small saddle, around the head of a small canyon and across a cut in a sandstone cliff to the mouth of Hidden Canyon, a point about 700 feet above the floor of the valley. The constructed trail ends at the canyon entrance located just to the east of the north wall of the Great White Throne. From there, it is possible to hike up the canyon--a narrow gorge, about a mile in length and seldom over 65 feet wide--on a dry stream bed.

Up to the season of 1928, Hidden Canyon had been almost inaccessible. The only way to reach it was up a draw, over a high ridge, and then down a steep descent into the canyon.

The trail was built in three sections. The first section, which leads from the East Rim Trail for 950 feet, was constructed as a horse trail. There are 11 switchbacks on this portion of trail, which averages four feet in width. Eighty-six cubic yards of locally-quarried dry sandstone wall was built to hold the first section of trail in place. The section section was built for hikers only and is 745 feet long, beginning at the saddle previously mentioned. The bulk of the distance was along a natural shelf, and the only construction work was on the north side of a cliff, where a section of solid rock had to be blasted out, and steps and an iron hand rail was built.

The third section began at a small side canyon and ran round the south of it to the mouth of Hidden Canyon, a distance of 390 feet. As the slope of this cliff varies from 50 degrees to vertical, construction on this stretch involved considerable dangerous work, such as hanging upon ropes while drilling, blasting, etc. This final portion of the trail is 2-1/2 feet to 4 feet wide and is constructed on a grade from 16 to 22 percent. Hand rails and chiseled steps were added in the narrow sections.

During trail construction, extreme care was taken to insure that the landscape would be scarred as little as possible. Brush and evergreen trees along the trail were carefully protected from damage by tumbling rock and blasting.

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